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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BORDEA 00020 01 OF 02 211016Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SAJ-01 /031 W
----------211038Z 125560 /11
R 210835Z JAN 77
FM AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0582
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
STRASBOURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BORDEAUX 0020

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION IN BORDEAUX

REF:

1. SUMMARY: DEPUTY/MAYOR CHABAN-DELMAS' ELECTORAL PROSPECTS FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS NEXT SPRING WERE ENHANCED BY HIS REELECTION JANUARY 18 AS PRESIDENT OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE AQUITAINE, DESPITE THE LEFT'S ARITHMETIC MAJORITY IN THE COUNCIL. THIS IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF HOW LOCAL ISSUES AND RIVALRIES HERE CAN UPSET THE POLITICAL COHESIVENESS OF EITHER THE LEFT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY IN LOCAL CONTESTS. AS FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS THEMSELVES, THE SOCIALISTS ARE PREPARING FOR A DISCREET BUT ACTIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHABAN WHO IS FAVORED TO WIN BY A SLIGHT MARGIN. THE PS REALIZES THAT IT CANNOT LAUNCH A STRONG PERSONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHABAN-DELMAS BECAUSE OF HIS ESTABLISHED NATIONAL POLITICAL PERSONALITY AND HIS STRONG LOCAL
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PAGE 02 BORDEA 00020 01 OF 02 211016Z

POLITICAL ROOTS; ACCORDINGLY, THE PS WILL TRY TO BASE ITS CAMPAIGN ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES TO TRY TO SHOW THAT CHABAN HAS NOT MANAGED THE CITY'S PROBLEMS WELL AND THAT THERE IS AN OPTION. THE PS IN BORDEAUX IS HAVING SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH PCF DEMANDS FOR INCREASING THE NUMBER OF COMMUNISTM CANDIDATES ON THE UNION OF THE LEFT LISTS. END SUMMARY.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

2. IN A SURPRISINGLY STRONG SHOWING CHABAN-DELMAS, THE
DEPUTY/MAYOR OF BORDEAUX, WAS REELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF
THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE AQUITAINE. AT BEST, HE WAS
EXPECTED TO SQUEAK THROUGH BECAUSE, ARITHMETICALLY, THE
CONSEIL REGIONAL (WHICH GROUPS THE FIVE DEPARTMENTS IN
THE AQUITAINE ECONOMIC REGION) TILTED TO THE LEFT IN THE
LAST LOCAL CANTONAL ELECTIONS WITH 39 LEFTIST MEMBERS AND
35 IN THE MAJORITY. DESPITE THE LINEUP, CHABAN-DLMAS
GAINED A NINE VOTE LEAD (41 TO 32 WITH ONE MAVERICK VOTE)
ON HIS ADVERSARY ANDRE LABARRERE, THE SOCIALIST DEPUTY/
MAYOR OF PAU. WELL-INFORMED SOURCES INDICATE THAT THE
MAIN DEFECTORS FROM THE LEFT WHO VOTED FOR CHABAN WERE
MEMBERS OF THE MRG (MOUVEMENT DES RADICAUX DE GAUCHE) WHO
ARE SPLIT IN THE LOT-ET-GARONNE DEPARTMENT ON PURELY OCAL
ISSUES WHICH SEPARATE THEM FROM THEIR SOCIALIST ALLIES.
IN ANY CASE, CHABAN'S EXCELLENT VICTORY PROVIDES HIM WITH
A GOOD HEADSTART IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

3. THE GENERAL ASSESSMENT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE POLITICAL
FENCE IN BORDEAUX IS THAT CHABAN IS THE LIKELY WINNER
OF THE MAYORALITY CONTEST IN 1977. HOWEVER, THIS RACE
IS EXPECTED TO BE MUCH CLOSER THAN IN THE PAST BECAUSE OF
LOCAL DISSATISFACTION OVER THE ECONOMIC/SOCIAL SITUATION
AND RECENT LEFTIST ELECTORAL GAINS. THE GENERAL ESTIMATE
IS THAT CHABAN WILL WIN WITH 51 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AGAINST
49 PERCENT FOR THE SOCIALIST LIST IN THE FIRST ROUND, IF THERE ARE
ONLY TWO LISTS. IF THERE ARE SEVERAL LISTS, THE PROGNOSIS
IS THAT CHABAN WILL OBTAIN ONLY 47 PERCENT. BECAUSE OF CHABAN'S
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PAGE 03 BORDEA 00020 01 OF 02 211016Z

DOMINANT POLITICAL PERSONALITY IN BORDEAUX AND THE REGION
AND HIS NATIONAL STATURE, THE MUNICIPAL RACE CANNOT AVOID
EVOLVING AROUND HIS PERSONALITY TO A LARGE EXTENT. HOWEVER,
ROLAND DUMAS THE SOCIALIST CANDIDATE WHO IS A PROMINENT
LAWYER (HE DEFENDED ABOU DAOUD) AND ADVISOR TO MITTERAND
MADE CLEAR TO ME AND VISITING EMBASSY POLOFF RISIK THAT
THE BASIC STRATEGY OF THE SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN WILL BE TO
RAISE CRITICAL ISSUES CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF
BORDEAUX AND THE REGION ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PLANES.
THEY PLAN TO REITERATE THAT THE ECONOMIC AND THE SOCIAL
SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED CONSIDERABLY, CERTAINLY
DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS, AND THAT CHABAN-DELMAS HAS
NOT REALLY DONE ENOUGH TO RAISE THE ECONOMIC STANDING
OF HIS CITY. SPECIFIC PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE ABSENCE OF
AN AUTO-ROUTE FROM POITIERS TO BORDEAUX AND THE ABSENCE
OF EAST-WEST HIGHWAYS LINKING BORDEAUX WITH MAJOR CITIES
IN THE SOUTHWEST, SUCH AS TOULOUSE, WILL BE POINTED OUT
AS EXAMPLES OF HIS INABILITY TO USE HIS ONCE VERY STRONG
NATIONAL POLITICAL INFLUENCE (AS PM FOR EXAMPLE) TO BRING

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

BENEFITS TO HIS MUNICIPALITY. ALSO, THEY PLAN TO CRITICIZE HIS ALLEGED INABILITY TO INDUSTRIALIZE THE BORDEAUX REGION AND TO MODERNIZE ITS COMMERCE.
ON THESE ISSUES HIS LEFTIST
CRITICS WILL FIND A READY AUDIENCE BECAUSE OF THE SERIOUS UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION LOCALLY AND THE RECENT CLOSURES OF VARIOUS SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED FIRMS SUCH AS BORDEAUX-SUD AND SAINT JOSEPH. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE BALANCE SHEET IS NOT AS BLEAK AS THE PS INDICATES. CHABAN HAS SPURRED INDUSTRIALIZATION AND MODRNIZATION PROJECTS (E.G., FORD PLANT AND THE NEW CONTAINER PORT OF LE VERDON) AND IF THE LEFTIST CRITIQUE IS NOT CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED, IT COULD BACKFIRE.

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PAGE 01 BORDEA 00020 02 OF 02 211229Z
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SAJ-01 /031 W
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FM AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 583
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 BORDEAUX 0020

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y TEXT DELETE FIRST 7 LINES OF TEXT SECTION 2 SHUD START PARA 4.

4. ROLAND DUMAS KNOWS THAT IT IS GOING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT TO UNSEAT CHABAN, BUT HE THINKS THAT IT IS ALSO PROBABLE THAT THE LEFT CAN GAIN FROM A VOTE OF GENERAL PROTEST AGAINST THE DETERIORATING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE CITY AND, THEREBY, BRING THE LEFT TO VICTORY. NEVERTHELESS, DUMAS DOES NOT DENY THAT THE LEFTIST EFFORT HERE IS ALSO VERY MUCH KEYED TO THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AND THAT IF THE LEFT MAKES A GOOD SHOWING IN THE MUNICIPALS IN 1977, THEY WILL HAVE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

FURTHER CONSOLIDATED THEIR LOCAL BASE FOR THE UPCOMING NATIONAL ELECTIONS. IN THIS RESPECT, THE SOCIALISTS ARE GOING TO MAKE A VERY REAL EFFORT IN AT LEAST TWO OF THE MUNICIPALITIES IN BORDEAUX'S GREATER URBAN COMMUNITY (I.E., PESSAC AND ST MEDARD). IF THE LEFTIST CANDIDATES ARE ELECTED IN THESE TWO MUNICIPALITIES, THEN THE URBAN COMMUNITY, OF WHICH CHABAN IS THE PRESIDENT, WILL SWING TO THE LEFT THEREBY ERODING THE MAJORITY'S CONTROL OVER
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GREATER BORDEAUX. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOCIALISTS HAVE TO FACE A TREND WHEREBY THE LOCAL POPULATION IN CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES IS RECOILING SLIGHTLY FROM THE PS/PCF GAINS IN THE 1974 CANTONAL ELECTIONS. THIS TENDENCY, IF REAL, MAY FAVOR THE MAJORITY CANDIDATES IN MARCH.

5. AS FOR THE LEFTIST LIST, THE PS IS HAVING REAL PROBLEMS WITH THE PCF WHICH IS DEMANDING 16 TO 18 SEATS OUT OF THE 45 ON THE OVERALL LIST. THE PCF STATES IT IS READY TO RESERVE THREE OR FOUR SEATS TO NON-COMMUNIST LEFTIST PERSONALITIES. THE SOCIALISTS ARE PROPOSING 8 TO 10 PCF SEATS. THE COMMUNISTS CLAIM THAT THIS IS A VIOLATION OF THE NATIONAL ACCORDS AND THE ISSUE MAY HAVE TO BE ADJUDICATED SHORLY AT THE NATIONAL PARTY LEVELS. HOWEVER, ROLAND DUMAS TOLD US THAT IF THE PCF INSISTED ON A LARGER SHARE AND BECAME TOO GREEDY, THE PS WOULD BE OBLIGED TO FROM A LIST WITHOUT THEM. ALSO, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME REPORTS THAT THE TRADITIONAL PS CANDIDATE IN BORDEAUX, MARC BOEUF, WAS QUITE RESENTFUL THAT ROLAND DUMAS HAD BEEN CHOSEN BY THE PS TO HEAD THE LEFTIST LIST IN BORDEAUX AND THAT BOEUF AND OTHER LOCAL SOCIALIST LEADERS WERE FIGHTING THIS "PARACHUTAGE." IN TALKS WITH SOCIALIST LEADERS, WE HAVE NOT DETECTED A REAL SPLIT AND THERE SEEMS TO BE BASIC AGREEMENT WITHIN THE PS ON THIS MATTER. ALSO, DUMAS CONFIDED THAT, TO DATE, HE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO LURE THE FORMER PREFET OF THE AQUITANINE REGION, GABRIEL DELAUNAY, ONTO HIS LIST IN AN EFFORT TO WOO CENTRIST VOTES FROM CHABAN'S SUPPORTERS. IN ANY CASE, MUCH MORE INTENSIVE WORK HAS TO BE DONE TO PUT A COHESIVE LEFTIST LIST TOGETHER AND OUR SOCIALIST CONTACTS HOPE THAT WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK TO TEN DAYS THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED.
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